Ute Tribal Council Gives Congress Program to Divide Tribe's Assets

A program to devide the assets of the Ute Indians of the Uintah and Ouray Reservations among the mixed-blood and full-blood members was presented to a joint subcommittee of the House and Senate in Washington Wednesday by the tribal council.

Four members of the tribal council testified at the hearing —Rex Curry, business manager, Albert Harris, Conner Chapoose and Russel Cutch. In addition, the subcommittee, which is headed by Sen. Arthur V. Watkins (R. Utah), heard John Boyden, Salt Lake City, attorney for the tribe, and Harry Gilmore, superintendent of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation.

Under the program the assets of the tribe would be divided equally between the 1,769 members, of which 439 are of mixed-blood or less than 50 per cent Indian. Early in the program there would be two tribal councils but gradually the council for the mixed-blood group would disappear as the members were absorbed by the white community.

Mr. Boyden frankly told the subcommittee that there had been some failures in the Ute program which now has been in progress for three years.

White men have contributed to these failures, he said, pointing out that the Indians had, spent too much of their money for automobiles. The money was mainly received from the $1,000 per capita payment made to members of the tribe out of the more than $30 million court judgment awarded in 1951.

Mr. Boyden said an ambitious program had been worked out for the next seven years and expressed belief that the Indians would not be ready for so-called liberation before that period.

Two full-blood Indians, Mr. Chapoose and Mr. Cutch, both told the lawmakers that their people had not benefitted as much as they should have from the tribal program so far.

The former asked that complete liberation be postponed "until our children are educated" and Mr. Cutch said he believed another per capita payment would be needed to help out the full-bloods.

Mr. Curry reviewed the work being done to help the Indians. He said there were 490 attending public schools now and absentees were declining. He also noted that a recreation program, sponsored by the tribal council, was progressing and that white people were coming to the reservation to take lessons in basket weaving and pottery making.

Mr. Emmons described the bill under consideration as "a fine example of what can be accomplished" when the Indians and the Congress work together for the constructive good of the Indian people.